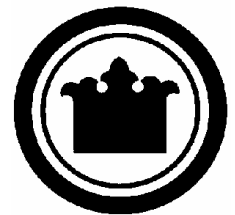


CITY- COUNTY RECORDS STORAGE OPERATIONS PARTNERING OPPORTUNITIES

King County Auditor's Office
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Purpose & Context

- 2003 survey by City/County Auditors identified functional areas for potential partnering arrangements between the City of Seattle and King County
- Purpose: to explore partnering opportunities for delivering local government services more efficiently
 - ◆ Achieve service improvements and cost savings
- Records Storage picked for study



Partnering Opportunities

Possible areas of partnering:

- Shared storage of records
- Joint purchase and implementation of imaging technology and electronic records storage
- Joint purchase and implementation of a comprehensive records management software system

Conclusions:

- The City and County cannot achieve cost savings in this area.
- Not a cost-effective option at this time, regardless of whether electronic storage technology is pursued jointly or independently.
- Opportunities exist for achieving service improvements.
 - ◆ Implementation would require an initial investment by the City and County but would not necessarily reduce costs.



Internal Operational Improvements

Applicable to both the City and the County

- Employ incentives that encourage agencies to authorize the prompt destruction of records once records retention periods expire;
- Continue to reduce the number of stored boxes containing records with mixed or unknown retention schedules; and
- Consider private vendor arrangements for the storage of excess records.



Operations Overview

EXHIBIT 1
COMPARISON OF CITY AND COUNTY 2003 RECORDS STORAGE OPERATIONS

	City of Seattle Warehousing Services Unit	King County Records Center
Records Storage Organization	Decentralized with storage services provided at multipurpose warehouse	Centralized under one records management authority
Records Storage Facilities	Leased warehouse with dedicated records storage space that could be expanded	Owns two storage facilities, leases space at a third facility, and also contracts with private storage vendors
Non-Archive Records Storage Capacity	20,720 cubic feet	90,826 County-owned cubic feet and 7,120 leased cubic feet
Non-Archive Records Storage Inventory	22,182 cubic feet	95,551 cubic feet, including records stored at leased facility
Estimated Annual Records Storage Costs	\$101,300 in 2003 and \$103,800 in 2004	\$386,000 in 2003 and \$410,057 in 2004
Records Storage Cost Allocation Methodology	Average per box rate estimated at \$5.74 in 2003 and \$5.88 for 2004 with cost allocations based on number of boxes stored plus number of retrievals during prior two-year period	Average per-box rate of \$4.04 in 2003 and estimated at \$4.29 for 2004 with cost allocations to agencies based on authorized full-time equivalent positions
Records Storage Staff	Approximately 1.0 full-time equivalent position	3.8 full-time equivalent positions



Finding 1

Partnering will not achieve cost savings, but new records management software could improve service

- Shared storage using city facility:
 - ◆ City would gain revenue, but county would pay more
- Joint imaging and storing of electronic records:
 - ◆ Would not be cost effective, based on current cost information
- Sharing records management software:
 - ◆ Could create efficiencies but would require outlay



Potential Partnering Alternative

- The City and County should consider negotiating a joint purchase of a new records center software system to enhance records tracking, improve current database-reporting capabilities, and provide for more efficient, Web-based interaction with City and County records storage customers.



Finding 2

Opportunities exist for the City and County to implement internal operating efficiencies independently

- Provide incentives to promote timely records destruction
- Continue to reduce the number of stored boxes containing records with mixed or uncertain retention schedules
- Consider private vendor options for storing records



Cost Comparisons

EXHIBIT 4
COMPARISON OF CITY, COUNTY, AND PRIVATE VENDOR RECORDS STORAGE RATES

	Cost Per Box	Cost Factors Included
City of Seattle	\$5.88 ^a	All records storage expenses included in rate
King County	\$4.29	All records storage expenses included in rate
Private Vendor Bid	\$3.41	Records storage expenses based on estimated storage, retrieval, and destruction activity
<p>Note^a: The City rate shown is the estimated 2004 cost allocation rate based on inventory of stored records and retrieval activity during a prior two-year period.</p> <p>Source: Information obtained from managers and staff of City, County, and private records centers during audit fieldwork conducted between June and December 2003.</p>		



Recommendations

- The City's Fleets and Facilities Department and the County's Department of Executive Services should consider incentives to encourage timely records disposal, such as additional charges for departments that store records beyond required retention periods.
- The City's Fleets and Facilities Department and County's Department of Executive Services should consider options for storing records with private vendors, particularly for records that are not likely to be retrieved until their destruction date.



Executive Response

- Concurs with findings and recommendations.
 - ◆ Will meet with city personnel regarding software purchasing
 - ◆ Believes incentives are in place to reduce number of boxes
 - ◆ Will review feasibility of using private vendors for storage